United Nations S/PV.7168

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7168th meeting
Friday, 2 May 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Oh Joon	(Republic of Korea)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

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14-31996 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Adama Dieng, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Ms. Pillay.

Ms. Pillay: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to address the Council on the crisis in South Sudan. My visit to the country this week, together with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, revealed a sharp and drastic deterioration in the human rights situation. The deadly spiral of revenge killings that has developed over the past four and a half months appears to be reaching a level of intensity that is generating a real fear of disaster among the people of South Sudan and that is compounded by the likelihood of widespread famine that the conflict has generated.

Two weeks ago, in the aftermath of the capture of Bentiu by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition, hundreds of people, many of them civilians — including those sheltering in places of worship and hospitals — were hunted down on the basis of their ethnicity and killed. Following the massacre at Bentiu, a retaliatory assault occurred in Bor against displaced people who had sought refuge in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) compound, leading to the deaths of at least 50 women, men and children. Many more were injured, including two peacekeepers.

Earlier this week, Mr. Dieng and I travelled to Bor and met several of the survivors, who described the assault to us and expressed fears of being targeted on the grounds of their ethnicity or of their being perceived as supporters of one or other of the warring sides. Thankfully, the strong intervention of Indian peacekeepers prevented hundreds more from being killed or injured.

UNMISS has performed commendably in opening its doors to some 80,000 people and has been sheltering and protecting them as best it can. However, several community leaders told us that they were terrified of further attacks and wish to be moved from the United Nations compound to places of safety. UNICEF reports that more than 9,000 children have been recruited into armed forces by both sides. Thirty-two schools have been taken over by military forces, and there have been more than 20 attacks on clinics and health centres. Children have also been killed during indiscriminate attacks on civilians by both sides.

Since December, we have seen versions of such targeted ethnic violence in Malakal and dozens of other, smaller towns across the country, as well as in Juba itself. The accelerating cycles of revenge are now such that the slaughters in Bentiu and Bor could ignite further violence. Some of those key state capitals have changed hands numerous times since the conflict started, either following fighting or after the other party retreated, leaving civilians more vulnerable to attacks.

Elements on all sides of the conflict have called publicly for their supporters to hunt down other ethnic groups. Harking back grimly to the events that led up to the Rwandan genocide, following their capture of Bentiu this month rebels commandeered a local radio station and urged supporters to take revenge, including by raping women from other communities. Even more recently, according to media reports, the Governor of the Lakes region told a gathering of youths last weekend,

> "What we are doing today is eye for eye. You pinch me, I pinch you too — no forgiveness. If someone pinches you time and again and you do not do the same, you are creating a point of weakness in yourself."

Such statements by senior public officials fuel violence. President Kiir told us that he hated revenge. I urged him to make his statement known publicly in order to stem the continued violence. Riek Machar acknowledged the need for a political solution, stating that he "hates the situation that he is in" and would be open to peace talks.

A matter of pressing urgency is the looming humanitarian disaster. The rainy season has begun, meaning that the planting season is already half over, which raises the spectre of widespread famine. Mr. Dieng and I have urged leaders on both sides to observe a 30-day ceasefire to allow people to return to their fields to plant as much as possible. Shockingly, their reactions indicated that this was not an overriding concern.

Last month I said, with respect to impunity and accountability before the Council, that the pervasive culture of impunity in South Sudan had fuelled the current violence and that it was critical that the capacities of the domestic judicial system to effectively address accountability be established without delay. Only clear and decisive moves towards accountability can hope to stop the cycles of revenge killings and re-establish a sense of common destiny across the country.

During our mission, Mr. Dieng and I conveyed that concern to President Salva Kiir and five senior Cabinet Ministers in his Government. We also travelled to Nassir, where we discussed the killings in Bentiu with opposition leader Riek Machar, the former vice-President of South Sudan, since the attacks were carried out by forces associated with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition, which he leads. The Government said that it is investigating the mass killings of civilians in Juba in mid-December, and Mr. Machar similarly assured us that he would investigate the slaughter in Bentiu, adding that he would do his utmost to stop his forces from attacking civilians.

I welcome those commitments to investigate, but as I said this week to my various interlocutors, such investigations must be independent, transparent and consistent with international standards, and they must move swiftly to take action against alleged perpetrators in order to reassure a terrified civilian population that the escalation of ethnic violence will not continue to intensify.

Unfortunately, I am not convinced that this will be the case. I fear that South Sudan's leaders are locked in a purely personal power struggle, with little or no regard for the appalling suffering that it inflicts on their people. Mr. Dieng and I warned them that they will inevitably be the subject of international investigations regarding the extent of their knowledge of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by subordinates under their authority and their failure to take reasonable steps to prevent such crimes.

With regard to the peace negotiations, international pressure has had some effect on the deadlock between President Kiir and Mr. Machar. Last week, in what was perceived as a gesture of reconciliation, the Government released four prisoners whom it had accused of plotting a coup. On Monday, peace talks between the warring sides reopened in Addis Ababa under the auspices of the regional East Africa bloc, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). And today, I understand that United States Secretary of State John Kerry has announced that the two leaders have agreed to meet.

I was able to meet in Addis Ababa with the head of the IGAD mediation team, the African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs and the Ethiopian State Minister of Foreign Affairs. IGAD is pushing for the quick deployment of the proposed protection and deterrent force, which will provide protection for the monitoring and verification teams responsible for monitoring the implementation of the cessation of hostilities signed in January. The IGAD head sees that as, in his words, "a game changer" in reducing the ongoing violence. Despite egregious violations of the cessation of hostilities by both parties, the monitoring and verification teams have not investigated any reported violations.

As I was reminded by the Ambassador during our meeting, more people have been killed after the cessation of hostilities was signed than before. I call on the Security Council to support the IGAD initiative. The deployment of the protection force will help save lives in the short run. The force should be deployed only if it has a clear mandate that supports the political resolution of the conflict.

I also met with four members of the African Union commission of inquiry. They have just returned from their first visit to South Sudan, where they met with internally displaced persons and victims in furtherance of their mandate to inquire into accountability, justice and reconciliation. The Commission will require substantial support if it is effectively to fulfil its mandate, including a fully staffed secretariat with the required expertise. My office stands ready to support the commission whenever requested.

IGAD and regional leaders share the same outrage as the rest of the world. They see the conflict as a

showdown between two leaders for political power and the control of oil revenues.

With regard to international action and recommendations, in December the Council agreed that the number of UNMISS peacekeepers should be increased from 7,700 to 13,200. However, the contributing countries have still not supplied some two-thirds of the extra troops. They are desperately needed. I trust that the members of the Council will do their utmost to ensure that UNMISS can count on a full complement of peacekeepers, as well as an adequate budget. The world's youngest country has a long history of suffering. Its people look to the Council to exert its authority to ensure a speedy political solution to this dreadful conflict.

The President: I thank Ms. Pillay for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Dieng.

Mr. Dieng: First, I would like to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Oh Joon, and other Council members for inviting me to brief this meeting.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, asked the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, and I to travel to South Sudan this week to follow up on the recent brutal attacks against civilians that took place in the northern town of Bentiu, including in places of worship and hospitals, and within a United Nations base where internally displaced persons were sheltering, in Bor. We are very grateful to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Hilde Johnson and the staff of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for the support they provided to our very brief but intense mission. I will restrict my remarks to elements that are relevant to my mandate.

The violence that broke out on 15 December 2013, following a power struggle within the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement between former Vice-President Riek Machar and President Salva Kiir, has quickly degenerated into ethnic violence. The recent brutal attacks in Bentiu, in Unity state, and Bor, in Jonglei state, seem to have changed the trajectory of the conflict, and if such attacks are not immediately halted they could plunge the country into serious violence that could spiral out of control. In the current situation, we see elements that we could categorize as risk factors for genocide and other atrocity crimes.

In Bentiu, more than 200 civilians of Dinka ethnicity were massacred and more than 400 others wounded, reportedly by opposition forces allied to former Vice-President Riek Machar. According to United Nations reports, the attackers separated ethnic Dinka from ethnic Nuer civilians and then executed the Dinka and others perceived to support the Government.

In Bor, armed elements reportedly affiliated with the Government forced entry into the UNMISS camp, in which displaced persons had been sheltering. They killed more than 50 civilians, mostly of Nuer ethnicity, and wounded around 100 others. That attack was allegedly carried out in revenge for the capture of Bentiu town by opposition forces. In our meeting with the internally displaced persons in Bor, they expressed fear that the attacks could recur at any time and pleaded with the United Nations to relocate them to somewhere safer, preferably Akobo. They said that they knew some of the perpetrators and that they did not feel safe in Bor, where they risked being targeted simply because they were Nuer. The UNMISS commander in Bor corroborated the statements of the internally displaced persons and informed us that the recent attack was well organized and that the attackers included individuals in uniforms of the army of South Sudan, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

Another cause for serious concern has been the reported use of radio in some areas to spread messages constituting incitement to violence against all those perceived to support the Government. It was reported that, in Bentiu, fighters allied with Mr. Riek Machar incited the civilian population to attack the Dinka, even encouraging their supporters to commit acts of sexual violence against women. That is totally unacceptable.

In our consultations with senior Government officials in Juba and with Mr. Machar, we noted with concern that both sides either denied attacks against civilians or justified them on the grounds that they were carried out in self-defence against a vengeful group. If we are to ensure the protection of the civilian population in the country, the State must acknowledge that it has the primary responsibility to protect all South Sudanese, irrespective of nationality, ethnicity or political affiliation, and prioritize that responsibility. Blaming one group or another is simply irresponsible and dangerous.

UNMISS is doing its best in very difficult circumstances and should be commended. All leaders in South Sudan must assume greater responsibility to ensure that those under their authority do not commit

serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. They should send strong messages to call for the unity and respect of all South Sudanese and take immediate measures to end the violence. I am glad that, in our meetings this week, both President Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar affirmed their will to do so. I hope that they will now take concrete steps to act on their commitments.

Reports of the homogenization of security forces by both camps are worrying as we consider the risk of atrocity crimes. The perception that those supporting Riek Machar are predominantly ethnic Nuer and those supporting President Kiir are predominantly Dinka has heightened the risk that individuals could be systematically targeted on the basis of ethnicity. That polarization is further compounded by reports of exclusion and discrimination on the basis of ethnicity. For example, in Bor the internally displaced persons reported to us that they had been denied access to medical care by Government officials because they were Nuer.

The culture of impunity in South Sudan has contributed immensely to the current crisis. As we search for peace in that young nation, we must also ensure that those responsible for crimes committed there are held to account. There can be no peace without justice. The current culture of impunity will only undermine our efforts. We have learned this the hard way from events in other places, including the genocide of the Tutsis that took place 20 years ago in Rwanda. To the survivors of the genocide, we owe a pledge to take all possible measures within our power to protect populations from another Rwanda. There is no excuse for inaction.

In this regard, I welcome the mediation efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the role of the African Union's commission of inquiry on South Sudan, which aim to end the violence and to bring justice to the victims. Both President Kiir and Riek Machar informed us that they were investigating any serious violations committed by their respective forces and that those found responsible would be held accountable. We should hold them to that commitment.

In our meeting with the members of the African Union commission of inquiry on South Sudan, I reiterated the expectations of the international community that the work of the commission would be independent, thorough and credible, and stressed that they should ensure that the commission not only seeks to pursue measures for reconciliation and national healing but also places emphasis on accountability measures. The members of the African Union commission of inquiry requested technical assistance from the United Nations, in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We should do all we can to support their work. I was encouraged to note, from my discussions with IGAD, that the IGAD mediation envoys believe that accountability should be part and parcel of any agreement reached to end the fighting.

To conclude, we must continue to follow the situation in South Sudan closely, take whatever measures are most appropriate to protect the population from further suffering and prevent the situation from spiraling out of control. The risk that it could do so is clearly high, based on the risk factors that I have highlighted today. UNMISS has saved lives by opening its gates to protect the population in Bentiu, Bor, Malakal and other places. The Mission is under stress, however, and troop-contributing countries should expedite the deployment of additional troops as part of the UNMISS force surge to enhance its capacity to protect the population.

If the parties do not clearly demonstrate their will and intention to end the violence and attacks against civilians, including incitement to commit violence, I believe the Council should consider taking additional measures against the parties to prevent the situation from deteriorating further. We should all support efforts aimed at holding accountable those responsible for serious violations. The findings and recommendations of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which is about to be released, and other human rights reports must be acted on, including, first and foremost, by the national authorities.

Finally, the issue of weaknesses in governance must be addressed by development partners. In addition to the seeming disregard for the condition of the population, authorities have turned a blind eye to corruption. That corruption has also created a clear motivation for others to take up arms so that they can also access national resources for personal gain. Today's violence in South Sudan is not motivated by the desire to change the country, but rather by self-interested goals related to accessing oil wealth and development resources. The international community must not be complicit in this agenda. The prevention of further violence therefore

requires a coordinated international response that includes a new posture by development partners. Any resolution should take this into account.

We must uphold our collective responsibility to protect the populations of South Sudan from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and their incitement. Ethnicity must not be used as an excuse to incite violence or to demonize, exclude or attack any community or section of the population in South Sudan.

The President: I thank Mr. Dieng for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I would like to thank High Commissioner Pillay and Special Adviser Dieng for their disturbing briefings today.

My Government joins with them and others in condemning the outrageous and deliberate targeting of civilians in South Sudan. Instead of ceasing hostilities, as was pledged three months ago, the parties have chosen to intensify fighting and to do so in ways that have shredded humanitarian norms. In April, forces loyal to former Vice-President Machar attacked civilians in Bentiu, pursuing them into a hospital, a church and a mosque, killing at least 200 and likely many, many more, and leaving the dead lying in the streets. In Bor, against a backdrop of hostile rhetoric against the United Nations from senior South Sudanese Government officials, several hundred armed youths entered the camp of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) by force and fired on displaced civilians in an ethnically motivated assault that was as cowardly as it was ruthless. The death toll in the clash exceeded 110, including 48 civilians who were fleeing for their lives.

Violence against civilians has also taken place in Juba, Malakal and Wau, accompanied by sexual abuse and recruitment of child soldiers. We have also heard of the ominous emergence of radio broadcasts that foment ethnic hate and incite further violence. And, as we all know, more fighting means more displaced civilians in need of safe haven and sustenance, more lives disrupted, more schools closed and an even larger burden for the increasingly hard-pressed United Nations relief agencies and donors.

We recall the jubilation less than three years ago when South Sudan achieved its independence. Amid honking horns and vivid expressions of national pride, cheering citizens raised their new flag and newly appointed diplomats took their seats in the General Assembly. Friends of South Sudan, who were familiar with the many sacrifices that preceded that day, celebrated. Exiles returned home to help the new nation get on its feet. The international community lent ample support, including a United Nations mission that pledged to work hand in hand with the Government and the Sudanese people to help build this new States. Civil society pitched in, and the vast majority of South Sudan's citizens focused on the hard work of bolstering their economy and building stronger communities.

But a country requires effective leadership, and in South Sudan, after a promising start, the leaders in office and in the opposition have chosen to place personal rivalries and suspicions above the best interests of their country. Those fuelling this conflict — many of them the very same individuals who were instrumental in bringing about South Sudan's independence — have chosen coercion over cooperation and violence over the democratic process. The result is catastrophe.

It is unconscionable that South Sudan's leaders have failed to take the steps necessary to restore peace and end the needless suffering of their people. The continuation of this failure could very well push the country further into a cycle of retaliatory ethnic killing, a deepening civil war and an even more devastating humanitarian disaster that will further worsen with the full onset of the seasonal rains and the looming prospect of famine. To prevent this, we call on all sides to do right by the people of South Sudan, who place their trust in them, and by the international community, which stood by them for decades and promised to roll up their sleeves and help build their new country.

We call on South Sudan's leaders to cease military action, as they promised to do when they signed the cessation-of-hostilities agreement. They must allow UNMISS to carry out its mandate, without harassment, threats or fear of assault, to protect the people of South Sudan. They must respect the rights and dignity of every citizen regardless of his or her ethnicity, enable the unfettered delivery of humanitarian supplies, stop the warlike rhetoric and incitement to violence, and publicly condemn any and all attacks on civilians. They must return in good faith to the peace process moderated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development; cooperate with United Nations and African Union human rights investigators and monitors, and resolve their differences by peaceful means. And they cannot

just promise to do all this, as they have before. They must mean it, and do it, and do it now.

Primary responsibility for ending the violence in the Sudan rests with the country's leaders, but there are helpful steps that the Council and the international community can take. On 3 April, the President of the United States issued an executive order providing for targeted sanctions against those individuals determined to have contributed to atrocities or taken actions harmful to peace and stability in South Sudan. The Council should urgently consider whether to put in place parallel targeted Security Council sanctions so as to try to deter the outrageous attacks on civilians of the kind we saw in Bor and Bentiu last month. We will also, of course, never give up on diplomacy.

Earlier today, Secretary of State John Kerry was in Juba, where he reiterated to President Kiir both the support of the international community to the people of South Sudan and our refusal to stand by if the country's leaders continue to go down the path of violence and destruction rather than that of negotiation and cooperation. President Kiir has said that he will implement the cessation-of-hostilities agreement immediately and meet directly with former Vice-President Machar. We have heard many promises from South Sudanese leaders, with no follow-up. We hope, for the sake of the people of South Sudan who are suffering through this terrifying crisis, that this time is different. And we urge President Kiir and Riek Machar to swiftly agree on a date for face-to-face talks.

The meeting is an emergency meeting, and should be treated as such by both sides. Every day the ethnic polarization and violence is growing worse. I emphasize that the United States strongly supports the critical work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, as well as the relief agencies doing their best in difficult conditions to meet the needs of men, women and children in dire straits. I remind the Government of South Sudan that it has an obligation to the international community to prevent attacks on the United Nations and those agencies. That means, to repeat it again, that the Government itself must cease intimidation, harassment and slander of the United Nations Mission and its personnel.

In the coming days, my Government will join in circulating a draft resolution that will revise the UNMISS mandate so that it focuses more fully on civilian protection, human rights monitoring and investigation, and the delivery of food and other emergency supplies. Given the key role UNMISS plays, the Council should take up that draft resolution with the urgency that this crisis demands.

Those who choose the path of further violence and hatred have been given fair notice. No one has licence to attack United Nations peacekeepers, international monitors or civilian non-combatants of any nationality or ethnicity. No one has the right to target others because of their ethnicity, to incite violence or breach the protective walls of a United Nations base. Those who ignore this warning should have no doubt that the international community will do all within its power to hold those individuals accountable. The culture of impunity must end.

My colleagues, it is imperative that we remain determined and united in pressing the Government and leading opposition figures in South Sudan to reverse their dangerous course and genuinely, actually, pursue peace. Last month, the world stopped for a moment to remember the genocide that took place in Rwanda 20 years ago. President Kiir attended that ceremony to pay his respects. Now President Kiir, former Vice-President Machar and other rebel leaders have a duty to themselves and their fellow citizens to pull their country back from the abyss. It is not too late, but the window is closing.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important briefing in the open Chamber. I would also like to thank High Commissioner Pillay and Special Adviser Dieng for their forthright and very disturbing briefings. Their visit was an essential one, and the Council itself must ensure that their immediate report back to us is instrumental.

All of us have been appalled by the horrifying events in Bentiu and Bor, where just weeks ago hundreds of men, women and children were targeted in ethnic killings while seeking refuge in a hospital, a mosque, a church and a United Nations base — all places that should be inviolate, as they are protected under international law. The use of radio broadcasts to incite ethnic killings and sexual violence against women and girls is chilling and frighteningly resonant of mass atrocities elsewhere. The image of slain child soldiers, their lifeless bodies still clutching AK-47s as they lay dead in the streets, is harrowing.

Australia's Foreign Minister Bishop, along with so many other world leaders, has strongly condemned this violence, whose scale and intensity represent a grim new

chapter of a brutal conflict that has already claimed the lives of many thousands of civilians and displaced more than a million. Until this cycle is broken, more atrocities will occur, inevitably, and many more lives will be lost, inevitably. Our message to all parties to this conflict is simple. There can be no military solution.

President Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar must uphold their responsibility to protect civilians, regardless of ethnicity or political affiliation. They must immediately commit themselves and their forces to a ceasefire and engage sincerely in the peace process led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). We commend IGAD and Ethiopia for their leadership and for the invaluable role they continue to play as partners for peace and stability in the region.

We welcome the imminent release of the report of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on human rights violations. No party to the conflict should be under the illusion that there will be anything less than full accountability for the crimes against humanity and war crimes we expect it to detail. In accordance with the principle of command responsibility, leaders will be held to account for their subordinates' actions. Impunity cannot persist, nor can blanket amnesties be entertained. The legacy of a lack of accountability is among the drivers perpetuating the conflict.

We welcome the African Union commission of inquiry and express our continued support to President Obasanjo and his team. It will remain open for the Council to consider referring the situation in South Sudan to the International Criminal Court once we have had the opportunity to consider the Commission's recommendations.

As a Council, our obligation now is to help pull the country back from the brink, confronted as we are by grave and persistent human rights violations, extreme protection challenges and a worsening humanitarian crisis. The situation clearly invokes the principle of responsibility to protect. We commend the swift action of UNMISS to establish protection sites in the early stages of the conflict, saving countless lives. That is why the United Nations exists. The commitment of the United Nations and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Johnson to the protection of civilians is a statement of their concern and determination to help the South Sudanese people. The Government of South Sudan must now state unequivocally its support for UNMISS and extend seriousfull cooperation to it.

We must move urgently to recast the UNMISS mandate to give the Mission clearer, more focused priorities, with the protection of civilians at its core. The new mandate should reaffirm the neutrality and impartiality of UNMISS, and freeze most State-building tasks until the fighting stops and a pathway to genuine peace is established. We must work with the peacekeeping partnership — the Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries — to deploy the requisite peacekeepers much faster, and we must equip them with the mandate, tools and mobility they need to protect civilians adequately.

The crucial next step is to expand the security footprint beyond the camps of internally displaced persons to protect more civilians at grave risk. And we support the proposed deployment of an IGAD protection force to allow IGAD's monitors to perform their task. With the spectre of famine looming, we must spare no effort to facilitate humanitarian access so that life-saving assistance can reach those people in most need. Any action to deny, delay or otherwise obstruct such access is unacceptable. My own country has provided over $10 million in emergency aid to date since the crisis began. We encourage Member States to give generously to the South Sudan humanitarian appeals.

As the fighting in oil-rich Upper Nile and Unity states demonstrates, competition over natural resources and their revenues is another important driver of that conflict. The proliferation and ready availability of small arms, light weapons and ammunition is further fuelling the fighting.

The Council has instruments, in addition to peacekeeping, that it can apply to mitigate the intensity of the conflict and bring a measure of protection to the people of South Sudan. We believe it is time for the Council to consider applying an arms embargo. Australia also supports the application of financial and travel sanctions against instigators of violence and perpetrators of human rights abuses in South Sudan. Those who stand in the way of peace must pay a price for their actions. Targeted sanctions are a lever to curb the protagonists' behaviour and bring them back to dialogue.

In conclusion, while South Sudan's leaders are engaged in a bitter and bloody power struggle in the pursuit of their own narrow self-interest, the suffering of the South Sudanese people grows more and more

acute. That is an unforgivable betrayal to the world's youngest nation. We must heed the crystal clear call to action we have heard today and accelerate the Council's response.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I too thank United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Pillay and Under-Secretary-General Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide Dieng for their briefings.

Nigeria followed with keen interest the visit of High commissioner Pillay and Special Adviser Dieng to South Sudan. We welcome the engagement of the United Nations with the Government of South Sudan, as well as the opposition. What began as intraparty political dispute last December, which could have been and, indeed, should have been resolved through dialogue, has degenerated to the point where the very future of South Sudan is now severly threatened.

Four months into the conflict, we are now seeing events that have all the hallmarks of mass atrocity crimes. Nigeria strongly condemns those crimes. High Commissioner Pillay has rightly described the situation in South Sudan as a

> "deadly mix of recrimination, hate speech and revenge killings that has developed relentlessly over the past four and a half months and is now reaching a boiling point".

The situation is looking dangerously similar to that which preceeded the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, which took place 20 years ago. The world has collectively said "Never again" to genocide. It is time for us to stand firmly by that solemn pledge.

As the body charged with maintaining international peace and security, we see the need for strong deterrent action by the Council to put a stop to the slaughter of innocent civilians on the basis of ethnicity, religion or whatever consideration. We call for the arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators and instigators of the mass killings in Bentiu and Bor in order to discourage impunity.

On another note, we welcome the resumption of peace talks this week by the Government and opposition and commend the mediation role of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in that regard. We reiterate Nigeria's position that there cannot be a military solution to the conflict. We urge both parties to the conflict to embrace dialogue as the only path to sustainable peace, security and stability in South Sudan.

With thousands killed and millions displaced, ending the conflict in South Sudan is a matter of extreme urgency. The millions of displaced South Sudanese cannot wait while the politicians dither — enough of the bloodshed, enough of the hardship. The time for peace is now and the Council, as well as the international community, must continue to take all necessary steps to support South Sudan in that regard.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I too would like to thank United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Pillay and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide Dieng for their briefings.

The bloody conflict triggered by the political strife in South Sudan has lasted for almost five months and caused tremendous civilian casualties and a sharp increase in internally displaced persons. The security and humanitarian situation is grave. China is deeply concerned about the situation. We urge both parties to the conflict in South Sudan to reach a ceasefire and end violence immediately to effectively implement the cessation-of-hostilities agreement and settle their differences through dialogue.

China supports the political mediation efforts led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and urges both parties to the conflict in South Sudan to cooperate with the IGAD mediation efforts and settle their differences in the framework of negotiations. We welcome the recent resumption of talks between the two parties under the auspices of IGAD and call upon the international community to coordinante with the IGAD-led mediation efforts, support the expeditious deployment of IGAD's ceasefire monitoring team, and leverage its constructive influence through their respective channels to advance the political talks.

China strongly condemns the violent attack that targeted civilians, the compound of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and peacekeepers in South Sudan. China urges the parties to the conflict to protect the security and safety of civilians, including foreigners and peacekeepers, and to investigate the incident. We welcome the despatch of the African Union commission of inquiry to conduct on-site investigations.

China is following the humanitarian situation in South Sudan with close attention and is cooperating fully

with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the Government of South Sudan to start the construction of a temporary camp for internally displaced persons in Juba as soon as possible. We call on the international community to step up its assistance to South Sudan and to honour its commitment to helping the people of thye Sudan to weather the crisis.

Since the outbreak of the crisis, China has worked hard and contributed constructively through various means to promote peace efforts and talks. The special representative of the Chinese Government on African affairs has repeatedly carried out mediation efforts between the parties to the conflict and the countries of the region. China has decided to offer financial support to the IGAD mechanisms. We shall continue to provide humanitarian assistance to South Sudan within our capabilities.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, and the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, for their briefings. I also thank the Secretary-General for his initiative to despatch a high-level mission to South Sudan to further clarify for the Council the most recent attacks on civilians in the country.

Chad once again expresses its concern at the widespread violence perpetrated in Bentiu and Bor, which has led to hundreds of deaths and wounded many more people, including women and children. We strongly condemn the systematic targeting of civilians on the basis of their ethnic origins and the use of radio broadcasts to incite hatred and sexual violence, not to mention the persecution in places that should be safe, including mosques, churches and hospitals.

The two parties are seeking a military solution on the ground instead of a negotiated solution, the prospects for which seem ever weaker, despite mediation efforts, especially those deployed under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, to revive negotiations. In this regard, we urgently call on the international community to bring pressure to bear on the parties to immediate cease violence against civilians and sites protected by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and to commit to an inclusive peace process. We reiterate our unmitigated support for the peacekeeping forces of UNMISS, who are working in very difficult situations to protect civilians in South Sudan.

We welcome the decision made by neighbouring countries and countries of the region to send troops to aid in the protection of civilians, which is a priority of the UNMISS mandate. We welcome the freeing of four political prisoners and hope that it will have a positive effect on the peace talks. We condemn all attacks on civilians and United Nations facilities, and call on all of the parties concerned to immediately cease acts of intimidation and harassment against UNMISS in order to allow it to fully implement its mandate. We welcome the assessment carried out by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding recent events and we eagerly await its report. We hope that the first mission of the African Union commission of inquiry currently under way can shed further light on these attacks so that the perpetrators of the atrocious acts may face justice.

We call once again on all parties concerned to choose the path of dialogue and national reconciliation in the interests of the people of South Sudan.

Mr. Pankin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Ms. Pillay and Mr. Dieng for their briefings on the findings of their visit to crisis-torn South Sudan. We share their profound concern at the mass violations of human rights and the norms of international humanitarian law by both parties to the conflict, including the monstrous killing of civilians on ethnic grounds. This is particularly troubling in the light of the diverse character of the young society of South Sudan. Among the most glaring examples of the clashes between these two camps were the crimes perpetrated in Bentiu and Bor, which could amount to war crimes.

We hope that the visit by Ms. Pillay and Mr. Dieng will push the parties towards practical implementation of their stated intentions to prevent such crimes in the future and to bring to justice all of those responsible. We trust that next week's report from the United Nations Mission to South Sudan (UNMISS) on the human rights situation there will be substantive and make a genuine contribution to tackling challenges with regards to establishing the truth and combating the deep-rooted culture of impunity that reigns in the country.

We welcome the activities of the African Union commission of inquiry on South Sudan, which should effectively complement United Nations

efforts in this area, including with the development of recommendations for addressing the root causes of the conflict and fostering a process of national reconciliation. We are particularly concerned at reports of an impending humanitarian catastrophe in South Sudan. The number of people displaced by violence now exceeds 1.2 million. Approximately 5 million people require humanitarian assistance, and the number is growing rapidly. The genuine threat of mass starvation in the country looms large.

We agree that the path towards addressing the grave humanitarian and human rights situation lies in a political settlement of the armed conflict. The leaders of both warring parties must finally set aside their own ambitions and begin seeking a solution to the crisis through peaceful means by implementing the agreement of 23 January. We strongly welcome the vigorous efforts of international partners, especially the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, seeking a negotiated solution and ceasefire. The international community, represented inter alia by the Council, must duly support those efforts in a timely fashion.

With regard to the recent and growing calls for the adoption of targeted Security Council sanctions against so-called saboteurs of the peace process in South Sudan, this is an issue that should be addressed extremely warily and cautiously. This subject needs to be fully fleshed out, taking into account both internal and regional factors. Our extensive collective experience shows that sanctions are far from a panacea and never have been an effective instrument for achieving political settlements to conflicts. What they can do, however, is undermine the spirit of cooperation. Moreover, it is important to canvass the opinions of leading regional actors on such an initiative.

The latest tragic events have again called into question the effectiveness of the leadership of the United Nations Mission to South Sudan. Despite a budget of almost $1 billion, a large contingent and robust mandate, it has proven unable to fully guarantee the protection of civilians, even on the grounds of its own compounds, which, incidentally, are not designed to host tens of thousands of civilians for long periods. The scheduled mandate review and increase in the maximum force strength should be geared specifically towards improving the performance of its activities and implementing the tasks mandated to it by the Security Council.

In conclusion, we must note that the current events in South Sudan are just the latest sad result of the fanciful scheming of Juba's main partners, who have sought to hide the truth and cover up for their stooges.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on the dire situation facing the people of South Sudan. I would like to thank High Commissioner Pillay and Under-Secretary-General Dieng for their timely visit to South Sudan and for their briefings to us today.

A million people have been displaced, and millions more are in need of humanitarian relief because of the unfolding conflict in South Sudan. Today, we have heard about chilling human rights violations and abuses, and the horrors go on. The South Sudanese people are bearing the highest costs and now face the risk of famine. Targeted attacks on civilians, including the recent attacks in Bentiu on those in hospitals and places of worship and targeting those under United Nations protection in Bor, demonstrate the extreme vulnerability of civilians in conflict.

The very clear ethnic dimension to the conflict in South Sudan is particularly alarming. Just over two weeks ago, the international community commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide. That meeting was a sober reminder of what can happen when, faced with clear evidence of atrocities, we collectively fail to act. The ethnic motivations behind targeted attacks on civilians in South Sudan should serve as a wake-up call to us all. The use of radio, for example, in Bentiu to incite ethnically motivated violence and sexual violence harkens back to the tragic events in Rwanda two decades ago. We must get better at using tools to counter that practice, including the United Nations own use of public information broadcasts in the country.

On human rights, it is clear that serious abuses and violations have taken place and continue to take place as the conflict drags on. The use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and the recruitment of children as combatants by both sides in the conflict are particularly concerning. UNICEF estimates that more than 9,000 children have now been recruited by both sides.

I thank High Commissioner Pillay and Under-Secretary-General Dieng for delivering the urgent concerns of the international community to the leaders of both sides in the conflict. We expect President Kiir and former Vice-President Riek Machar to act immediately

on those concerns. All political leaders must take full personal responsibility for continued fighting and the plight of the people. They must take immediate action to curb violations and abuses of human rights, engage seriously in peace talks, and enable full humanitarian access. We have said that before, but those steps have not been taken, and the needs become ever more urgent.

Looking forward, we need to focus on three areas of activity.

First, we must end impunity. Accountability and justice are essential to national healing and reconciliation. Allegations of violations and abuse must be thoroughly and impartially investigated. Those responsible must be held to account. We support the African Union commission of inquiry and look forward to the outcome of its investigations. But with different domestic, African Union and United Nations work under way in the area, it would be helpful for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to set out the different available tracks for accountability in South Sudan. In addition, we request OHCHR to consider a thorough investigation and to report on the atrocities recently committed in Bentiu and Bor. We also look to the Human Rights Council to take appropriate action in response to the human rights situation in South Sudan.

Secondly, we must increase political support to the mediation effort. The international community, including the Security Council, must consider all available levers and tools in the effort to deter a devastating slide towards repeated mass atrocities and protracted conflict. The focus, responsibility and priorities we give the United Nations Mission in South Sudan are only part of the answer. The ultimate responsibility lies with those leading the war effort. We must continue to send strong and clear messages that the international community cannot accept the current situation. We support the tireless mediation efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in the search for lasting peace in South Sudan. Women and civil society must play a role in that. But those mediation efforts may need to be complemented by targeted sanctions against those who obstruct peace and by reducing the arms available to those involved in the conflict.

Thirdly, the safety of millions of innocent civilians in South Sudan must remain paramount. With the continued fighting and the impending rains, the already acute humanitarian situation could become a humanitarian disaster. Famine lies around the corner. Millions could be condemned to untold suffering that would take decades to rectify. The needs are urgent and clear. The onus is on the international community to help meet those needs. We must increase the humanitarian response as quickly as possible. The British Government will do its part and has released an additional amount of approximately $65 million for the humanitarian response.

The situation in South Sudan is urgent. The South Sudanese people have suffered far too long. The international community has the tools to alleviate that suffering. We must act and we must do so quickly.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): Mr. President, I thank you for convening this briefing on the human rights situation in South Sudan. I thank Ms. Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Adama Dieng, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, for their respective briefings following their recent visit to South Sudan. I would also like to recognize the Ambassador of South Sudan, Ambassador Deng.

We appreciate the Secretary-General's dispatch of several United Nations teams to South Sudan to monitor the situation on the ground and for his unequivocal messages to both the South Sudan leadership and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition.

On 14 July 2011, the General Assembly adopted resolution 65/308, introduced by Rwanda on behalf of the African Group, admitting the Republic of South Sudan as the 193rd State Member of the United Nations. As we admitted that young nation, it was with hope, anticipation and pride that the international community stood ready to accompany South Sudan as it built its State institutions and forged a united South Sudan for all its citizens. However, three years later, considering the widespread killing of civilians and the human rights situation described by our briefers today and emphasized by Ambassador Samantha Power, we cannot remain bystanders. We cannot remain bystanders.

You cannot fight for independence for years and then turn around and kill our own people. It is a shame. Almost five months have passed since the beginning of the conflict in South Sudan. Hundreds of innocent civilians have been killed due to their ethnicity and political affiliation; 1.5 million civilians have been

displaced. All of that has been happening while the world is watching. During our most recent consultations on South Sudan, held on 23 April, we were shown very painful images of hundreds of dead bodies piled on the ground. For Rwandans like me, those images take us back to 20 years ago. After the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, the international community said, "Never again". Now we say, "lessons learned". That has — unfortunately, we believe — become just a cosmetic word. It is, again, a real shame.

What do we do now about the continued killings of innocent civilians in South Sudan? What do we do about the recent mass atrocities committed against civilians in Bentiu and in Bor? Or, for that case, what do we do now when we hear a radio station which, 20 years after the infamous RTLM broadcasts in Rwanda, has called upon one group of the community to rape women of another group in retribution? Do we again condemn and adopt statements expressing outrage?

Recently Ambassador Joy Ogwu of Nigeria, during her last meeting as President of the Council (see S/PV.7166), expressed regret that sometimes we become bystanders and display a lack of unity in the Council, due to national interests. I hope that on this issue, the Council will do whatever it takes to stop the killing of innocent people in South Sudan. That being said, we commend the men and women of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) who, under intense pressure, opened their compound to the civilian population in distress, saving thousands of innocent lives. I recall that while in Kigali during the twentieth commemoration of the genocide against the Tutsi, the Secretary-General made an important statement, very clearly. He said,

> "I have sent my own signal to United Nations representatives around the world. My message to them is simply this: When you see people at risk of atrocity crimes, do not wait for instructions from afar; speak up, even if it may offend. Act. Our first duty must always be to protect people — to protect human beings in need and distress." (*SG/SM/15755*)

But we definitely need to do more. There are millions of people outside of UNMISS compounds who still need our protection. As UNMISS compounds cannot also receive Sudanese under threat, we should find a way to stop what is going on there, without wasting further time.

Rwanda's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Louise Mushikiwabo, stated on Saturday in Nairobi, "Let us stop this idea that people have to die when we want power. Let us distance citizens from power differences". We believe that it is the primary responsibility of the Government of South Sudan to protect civilians from mass atrocities. That responsibility shifts to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A) in the areas under its control.

Why do innocent children, women and men always pay the price when politicians are fighting for power? Why? Let us be clear. Leaders shall be held responsible for all atrocities committed by people under their control. Indeed, they bear command responsibility. I prod the leaders of South Sudan to envision the future of their country after this crisis. The choices and opportunities that they have today to solve the crisis may not exist in the future.

As we welcome the resumption of negotiations among the parties, in Addis Ababa this week, I would like to point out three key elements that Rwanda believes will improve the current situation in South Sudan, if they are given priority.

First, the parties must immediately cease hostilities and stop the continuing killing of innocent civilians. That will save thousands of displaced people from the humanitarian crisis, especially during the upcoming rainy season, which will further aggravate the situation. The parties have signed the ceasefire, but regrettably they have not abided by their commitments. This time, the international community should use all necessary means to convince the parties to cease their hostilities if, of course, they cannot do so themselves. They should ensure full respect for the cessation-of hostilities-agreement. I urge both parties to fully cooperate with the monitoring and verification mechanism led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). It is also urgent that the United Nations and IGAD agree, as soon as possible, on how the mechanism, which includes the deployment of a protection and deterrent force, can be supported in order to fulfil its mandate. We wish the parties to have the same understanding of the mechanism.

Secondly, it is an obligation of the international community, including the Council, to make sure that all perpetrators of atrocity crimes in South Sudan are brought to justice. In that regard, we encourage both the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for

Human Rights and the African Union commission of inquiry on South Sudan to expedite their investigations so that the perpetrators are held accountable. In the meantime, the fact that both President Salva Kiir and former Vice-President Reik Machar have committed themselves to investigating the human rights abuses committed by their respective combatants, especially the ethnic killings in Juba in December and the recent atrocities in Bentiu and Bor, is very encouraging and must be translated into tangible action.

Thirdly, with regard to the ongoing IGAD mediation in Addis Ababa, the parties should put their own interests behind the national interest and engage in a constructive dialogue with a view to finding a sustainable political solution. In that context, Rwanda welcomes the decision taken by President Kiir to release the four remaining detainees arrested following the outbreak of the crisis in December, and to drop the charges against them. While that will create a better environment for negotiations, the willingness recently expressed by President Kiir to hold direct talks with Mr. Machar is also commendable. Furthermore, we believe that the ongoing initiative of the SPLM intraparty dialogue, launched in Addis Ababa recently, could be another milestone towards identifying fault lines in South Sudan's political process and thus lead to the necessary political reforms. We take this opportunity to commend IGAD for its commitment to finding a solution to the crisis and look forward to the upcoming IGAD summit on the crisis in South Sudan.

As we continue to urge UNMISS to ensure the increased protection of civilians, the Secretariat needs to expedite the full deployment of additional troops through inter-mission cooperation, as authorized by resolution 2132 (2013). That is important in order to increase the Mission's protection capacity. In that regard, we urge all stakeholders, especially donors, to support the Mission on the ground and provide the air-lift capability necessary for the swift deployment of the required troops and police personnel. Furthermore, it is also important that the Government of South Sudan improve its relations with UNMISS and consider the Mission as a partner in the restoration of peace.

To conclude, I call on all of us to exercise our respective responsibilities to solve the crisis in South Sudan. The warring SPLM/A parties must stop the war and the killing of civilians and engage in a genuine dialogue. IGAD and the countries of the region should strive to help the parties find a solution to the conflict, and the United Nations must protect civilians effectively, ensure the end of hostilities and killings and ensure that the perpetrators in Bentiu, Bor and elsewhere in South Sudan are held accountable for their crimes.

I also look forward to the United States proposal of a draft resolution and to working together on that.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Adama Dieng, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, for their briefings.

The alarm raised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights cannot leave the Council indifferent. The situation in South Sudan is extremely serious. The country has become an area of lawlessness. Violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are increasing, including deliberate attacks against civilians, large-scale sexual violence and the recruitment of child soldiers. A cycle of reprisals has begun, fuelled by public calls to violence and hatred. Radio broadcasts intensify that vicious circle by calling for women from opposing communities to be raped. We are dealing with a dangerous drift into communitarian conflict, which is being exploited by both parties.

The humanitarian situation is equally disturbing. The number of displaced persons and refugees is increasing by the day. Nearly 5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. In particular, the situation in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) camps, which are still home to almost 80,000 civilians, has deteriorated markedly. The rainy season will further exacerbate the situation, and there is a threat of famine.

Both parties are responsible for the tragic situation and the seriousness of the violations committed against the civil populations. The massacres of Bentiu and Bor have once again demonstrated that no one has a monopoly on violence or atrocities. We support the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) mediation efforts, but we must recognize that, today, the political process is at a standstill. While a ceasefire was signed on 23 January, the parties still refuse to engage in peace talks and act only on the basis of the territorial gains they can make, especially in oil-producing areas.

The Government of South Sudan, just like the opposition forces, must stop any incitement to hatred

and the attacks against United Nations staff. The resumption of talks in Addis Ababa on 28 April is an encouraging sign. We call, as IGAD has, for Mr. Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar to meet face-to-face to end the vicious cycle of massacres and decide on a one-month truce, which will be essential for the South Sudanese to sow their fields.

While the authorities have the primary responsibility to protect their citizens, the international community should take the measures necessary to ensure the protection of populations under threat. The Council cannot remain indifferent to the situation in the country. That is why France supports a rapid review of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). All its capacities must be dedicated to enhancing protection for civilians, respect for human rights and free access to humanitarian aid.

Noting the lack of political will to reach a peace agreement, we also believe that the Security Council should consider the establishment of a sanctions regime against individuals who oppose the political process. To answer the legitimate questions asked by the Russian Federation, the regime could initially not name names but simply be used as a means to exert pressure on both parties.

The reign of impunity in South Sudan cannot continue. Independent and impartial investigations must be conducted immediately. The perpetrators must be tried and convicted, regardless of their political affiliation. The African Union's commission of inquiry must collect evidence on the crimes committed. The attacks, in particular those against United Nations bases, constitute war crimes. Given the exceptional gravity and scale of the crimes, and within the framework of a dialogue with IGAD and the African Union, we must also consider a referral to the International Criminal Court.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, and the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, for the valuable information they have provided to us in their briefings. We would also like to express our thanks and appreciation to the entire staff of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and other international entities for their work in extremely difficult circumstances in South Sudan.

We would like to express our grave concern over the deterioration of the situation in South Sudan, the ongoing killings and the serious humanitarian violations by both parties to the conflict. We would also like to stress the importance of putting an immediate end to mutual incitement that contributes to the spread of hatred and the promotion of ethnic and tribal divisions within South Sudanese society. We would also like to stress the following points.

First, it is clear that, several months after the outbreak of the crisis in South Sudan, and despite the Council's full involvement, the tireless international efforts to contain the crisis and put an end to humanitarian suffering and the efforts deployed by African parties to translate the agreement on the cessation of hostilities into a basis on which we can build, we are still far from the lasting stability, political dialogue or national reconciliation that we all seek.

A solution to the crisis in South Sudan is directly linked to the fulfilment by both parties of their commitments and pledges undertaken under the agreement on the cessation of hostilities. That presupposes the willingness, ability and commitment of leaders in the field to implement such an agreement on the ground.

However, it has become clear that, despite the commitments made by the leaders of the two parties to the international community in bilateral encounters, the situation on the ground has further deteriorated. That in turn gives rise to doubts about the credibility of those parties in dealing with the international community and its efforts.

We have previously stressed the importance of identifying the areas most vulnerable to violations and of the deployment of efforts to protect civilians. We would like to once again stress the importance of preventive measures to avoid the recurrence of the events that recently took place in Bentiu and Bor. We must also stress the importance of taking into account the distribution of the population groupings most vulnerable to violations when deploying further forces.

In conclusion, we reiterate the need for the Government of South Sudan and the opposition to shoulder their responsibilities in bringing the perpetrators of violations and crimes to justice. The international community and the Security Council must bring pressure to bear on both parties in that regard and consider measures that could be taken with a view to

bringing criminals to justice, including the possibility of a referral to the International Criminal Court. We would like to stress what Ms. Pillay and Mr. Dieng have stated, that is, that there will be no peace without justice. Therefore, efforts should be undertaken to change the culture of impunity in South Sudan, and the Security Council should focus its efforts in line with that.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): Thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this briefing. I would also like to thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, and the Special Envoy for the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, for their extensive briefings.

Only last month we commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide (see S/PV.7155). As we adopted resolution 2150 (2014), we recommitted to preventing and fighting genocide and other serious crimes against humanity. We also reaffirmed the principle of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. And yet, three years after South Sudan's independence, the reports from that country read like catalogues of barbarity, with all actors — Government forces, opposition and militias — committing shocking atrocities. Incitement, targeted killings, rape and torture are the typical ingredients that lead to a situation of genocide. Even places that are supposed to be considered safe shelters, such as places of worship, hospitals and United Nations bases, have been brutally attacked. The despicable attacks in Bor on the United Nations compound and the slaughter of civilians in mosques and churches in Bentiu deserve the strongest condemnation of the Council and the entire international community.

What is also troubling is a fact that the High Commissioner mentioned — that sowing season will likely be missed, and as many as 7 million people will soon face a terrible famine. And to think that the two rival leaders and their supporters would prefer to continue their bloody rivalry rather than grant one month of calm for the people to plant their crops, in order to save them from the horror of death by starvation. It is definitely very hard to confront such facts.

We note President Salva Kiir's statement earlier today that he is ready to meet face to face with Riek Machar. We have not heard a denial of that from Machar, and we assume that he is also ready to meet. It is absolutely crucial that the two leaders renounce and denounce all violence and call on their forces and supporters to lay down their arms, stop targeting civilians and pursue a path of genuine dialogue and reconciliation. Both the Government and the armed opposition must cooperate in investigating the horrendous crimes that have been committed. The perpetrators must be arrested and prosecuted with full respect for internationally recognized standards of due process. Accountability is a must. If there is no end to impunity, violence and atrocities will continue.

The Council must see to it that current and future investigations examine the extent to which political and military leaders knew or should have known about what was going on and failed to take all necessary and reasonable measures to prevent the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by themselves or by subordinates under their effective control and authority. We welcome the efforts of the commission of inquiry of the African Union and urge it to continue documenting all atrocities committed on both sides. We look forward to the report of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on violations and abuses on the ground. As some speakers have already said, the Human Rights Council's active involvement is also essential.

It is time for the warring leaders to place the interests of their country and people above their own. We have a tiny glimmer of hope today with the announcement by President Kiir, and we urge the leaders to take advantage of this window of opportunity. The political leaders must act on their words and must stop the violence. The Security Council, for its part, must ensure that if that does not happen, we will use all the tools at our disposal to send a clear, strong message that war crimes, crimes of sexual violence and atrocities will no longer be tolerated. I understand the differences of opinion on the use of sanctions, but my delegation believes that, if nothing else works, the threat of targeted sanctions is a useful tool that must be made real and imminent if we want the warring parties to change their behaviour. Referral to the International Criminal Court should also be on the table.

Deterrence on the ground must be strengthened. We are looking into revising the UNMISS ma..date to that effect. The deployment of a regional task force to protect ceasefire monitors and deter Government and rebel forces from staging assaults is to proceed at full speed. We would like to express our appreciation to UNMISS

and to Special Representative Johnson for doing their utmost under extremely difficult circumstances.

We regret the continuing challenges in relations between the Government of South Sudan and UNMISS. The Government must stop the harassment of the United Nations Mission and its staff and make it clear to the public that it appreciates UNMISS's lifesaving role and are fully committed to cooperating and providing safety and security to its personnel, as well as to ceasing all status-of-forces agreement violations. It is totally unacceptable that a United Nations mission, carrying out vital work in extreme conditions at a risk to the lives of the peacekeepers and supported by the international community, should be attacked or abused in any way. With the growing number of crises in the world, peacekeepers and the funds for them are in ever greater demand. Countless victims of violence elsewhere would be happy to have those peacekeepers protecting them, and I think the Government of South Sudan should keep that in mind. They are doing a vital job.

In conclusion, we call our leaders "leaders" not simply because that is the only word we have, but because we expect them to show true leadership. If in future President Salva Kiir and Riek Machar want to be considered leaders by their own country, this is a moment for them to show that, to step up to that leadership and make sure that the danger of destroying the independence so hardly won just a few years ago does not become a gruesome reality.

Mr. Barros (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, and Mr. Adama Dieng, the Special Envoy for the Prevention of Genocide, for their briefings. We especially appreciate their undertaking a joint visit to South Sudan.

Chile has stated that accountability in the area of human rights must be a priority in the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). We are witnessing what could be the start of a humanitarian catastrophe, and there are strong indications that compel us to believe that genocide and crimes against humanity are taking shape in South Sudan. While there is no question that every State is responsible for protecting its people from large-scale and widespread abuses of human rights, the international community, in accordance with the concept of the responsibility to protect, as set out in the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit, is obliged to support States when they will not meet or are clearly incapable of meeting that obligation.

The Council must act rapidly. Prevention is possible and we should make use of all the early-warning mechanisms that can help us avoid the loss of more lives while also promoting dialogue between the parties. We cannot remain indifferent to the information Ms. Pillay and UNICEF gave us on 30 April on the deaths of children as a result of indiscriminate attacks on civilians, many of them internally displaced; on the recruitment of more than 9,000 children by the armed forces on both sides, which is a war crime under the Rome Statute; on the seizure of 32 schools and attacks on about 20 clinics and health centres by armed forces; and on sexual violence against girls and women.

We believe that those facts, and previous ones, that the Council has received on human rights violations and other atrocities in South Sudan, including the reports from UNMISS since the conflict broke out in December, are enough to get us started on an in-depth discussion on imposing specific sanctions on the individuals responsible. We hope that the African Union commission of inquiry can submit its report soon. We trust that there is sufficient coordination with UNMISS in order to ensure that background information and evidence are not lost, which would make accountability difficult.

We appreciate the courage and the determination of Ms. Johnson and the UNMISS staff to protect the internally displaced persons and to forge ahead with the investigation on human rights violations, despite the prevailing violence and the constant attacks and threats. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights did, we extend our appreciation to the peacekeeping staff from India whose actions have allowed for the protection of many civilians during the crisis.

The Council and the other bodies of the United Nations system must step up efforts to prevent a catastrophe in South Sudan, which would lead to the deterioration of the youngest State Member of the Organization. We believe that it is time for the Council to refer the background information it has on the situation in South Sudan to the International Criminal Court in order to show that we can take concrete actions to strengthen those already taken by the United Nations to protect the civilian population.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I also thank Ms. Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Adama Dieng, Under-Secretary-General Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, for their briefings on their mission, which was necessary and met the essential need to convey the fact that impunity cannot and will not be tolerated.

I think that it is important that we are meeting publicly, not just because of what we can say and do today, which can help to end the hostilities and the attacks against the civilian population, but it is also important because, Argentina believes, for the purpose of accountability and transparency, this is how the meeting should be held, pursuant to the general principles established in rule 48 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

I would like to reiterate our support for the work and efforts that our Blue Helmets are undertaking in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Beyond any shadow of a doubt, that work has allowed us to prevent many deaths. I also want to underscore the responsibility and efforts deployed by the United Nations, together with regional and subregional bodies, aimed at stopping the crisis and mitigating so much suffering.

Argentina shares the condemnation in the strongest terms of the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law that have been perpetrated by both parties to the conflict in South Sudan over recent months. We appreciate that during their visit, Ms. Pillay and Mr. Dieng warned the country's leaders that the inquiries under way, or future inquiries, will inevitably examine those parties' responsibility for the war crimes and crimes against humanity being perpetrated in the country. We also believe that it is essential that they have reminded them about their responsibility to protect civilians and the need to put an end to hostilities as soon as possible to prevent the situation from worsening further.

Argentina supports the work of the African Union commission of inquiry, which is necessary if those responsible for the atrocities are to be brought to justice. We also believe that in all of the inquiries under way — be they by the African Union, UNMISS or the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights — it is extremely important to establish who is responsible at the highest levels, as it is not enough to merely punish those who undertook the heinous actions; rather, it is necessary to establish responsibility all the way up the chain of command. There is a need to put an end to impunity so that massive violations of human rights stop. However, it is also equally necessary to reach a political agreement.

On that point, encouraging news from South Sudan is scant. We note the release of the remaining 4 of the 11 detainees accused of undertaking a coup d'état, the progress with regard to the African Union's commission of inquiry and that there is still hope that the parties can truly negotiate a cessation of hostilities as they have said they are willing to do. But they need to do that, because the victims are not invisible. They should do that because death speaks. The murder of civilians, of boys and girls, women and the elderly, because of their ethnicity, the colour of their skin; the rape of women to destroy their dignity and in vengeance; the recruitment of thousands of children to lead them to death instead of bringing them to a life that is free of fear; the destruction of hospitals in order to unleash epidemics; the occupation of schools to nourish ignorance; the destruction of entire towns by those whose hands are stained with petroleum; the calls to hate aimed at stripping communities of the opportunity to learn respect for differences and love for peace — those crimes are not invisible because death speaks in Bor and Bentiu and in all corners. And we are listening.

For that reason, we too must show enormous responsibility, not just by lamenting and condemning atrocious acts and famines. Argentina believes that the Security Council should continue, as the case may be, to support, to take or to assess the following efforts as soon as possible.

First, Argentina has no doubt that the most important thing at this time is to provide all the necessary protection for the tens of thousands of individuals who have sought refuge in the hands of UNMISS and have not found protection. It is urgent that a decision be made with regard to the Secretary-General's request to increase the troop numbers of UNMISS and, in should that be approved, ensure that it is effectively done.

Secondly, we must establish what support the United Nations can provide so that the regional force that has been decided upon by the Heads of State and Government of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development can be deployed.

Thirdly, we hope that the commitment to ensure that the victims will receive justice and reparation nationally in South Sudan is not an empty promise. We trust that it is not a empty promise. However, we also wish to recall that when a country cannot or will not ensure that justice is carried out, the International Criminal Court is there. That is a mechanism that Argentina supports and defends.

Fourthly, we again condemn the actions of the Government of South Sudan and the forces loyal to them with regard to UNMISS and humanitarian assistance. Argentina believes that the activities of UNMISS must be solely focused on matters linked to the protection of civilians, human rights and humanitarian assistance. We do not believe that there is any room for the allocation of resources to other types of tasks.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate our concern about the regional repercussions that the conflict could have, in particular with regard to the presence of foreign troops in the country. I would also like to echo the question of Ms. Pillay in the press conference of 30 April: "How much worse does it have to get before those who can bring this conflict to an end, especially President Kiir and Mr. Machar, decide to do so?"

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I want to thank Ms. Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Adama Dieng, Under-Secretary-General Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, for their poignant words, which illustrate both the gravity of the situation in South Sudan and the United Nations willingness to implement the Secretary-General's "Rights up front" initiative, which prioritizes the struggle against human rights violations with a view to preventing mass atrocities.

Luxembourg condemns in the strongest terms the attacks in Bentiu and Bor that have claimed hundreds of civilian casualties, among them many women and children. These attacks are the most recent examples of the serious violations and atrocities committed against civilians, often based on ethnicity, that have been attributed to both sides since the conflict began on 15 December 2013. Abuses against civilians have likely led to thousands of deaths. They have displaced more than 1 million people.

The South Sudanese leaders who are in dispute must finally take responsibility and stop the carnage. It is unacceptable that Government and opposition forces continue to violate the cessation of hostilities agreement of 23 January, and that the parties stubbornly refuse to engage in political negotiations. We continue to fully support the mediation efforts by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). We want to take this opportunity to call urgently on the parties to begin to address the substantive issues in good faith, without further delay. As the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, each day missed at the negotiating table increases the risk of famine for the South Sudanese people.

We strongly condemn the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law that continue to be committed with impunity in South Sudan. The picture painted this afternoon by Ms. Pillay and Mr. Dieng is frightening. President Salva Kiir and former Vice-President Riek Machar bear a heavy responsibility. They must absolutely publicly reject all attacks against civilians and commit to holding those who ordered or carried out the attacks to account for their actions. The fight against impunity is a priority for us. Those responsible for serious violations, including the officials who ordered, instigated, encouraged or tolerated such violations and abuses, must understand that the international community is watching, that their crimes will not go unnoticed and that they will have to answer for them.

In that regard, we welcome the publication next Monday of the final report on human rights violations of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). We also welcome the launch of the commission of inquiry of the African Union, led by former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, which has just carried out its first mission to South Sudan.

That United Nations report and the investigative work of the African Union are important, but we must go further. There is no doubt that war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed. In that context, to fight against impunity and prevent future atrocities, we believe that the Council must seriously consider a referral to the International Criminal Court.

More generally, the Security Council must consider all the means at its disposal, including the establishment of a sanctions regime, to bring the parties to see reason, cease hostilities and avoid an escalation of the situation with incalculable consequences. The adoption of targeted sanctions against those who have perpetrated violations of human rights and international

humanitarian law, violated the agreement on cessation of hostilities and impeded the progress of peace talks should be considered.

We welcome the important work carried out by UNMISS to protect civilians, especially the civilian refugees in its bases, under extremely difficult conditions. We condemn the restrictions UNMISS continues to face, the harassment of its staff and the persistent violations of the status-of-forces agreement. The Security Council should review the mandate of the Mission to focus on three priorities: the protection of civilians, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance and monitoring human rights. It is also crucial to strengthen the Mission by integrating, on terms to be agreed, the forces proposed by IGAD.

Luxembourg condemns in the strongest terms the recruitment and use of children, killing and maiming of children, sexual violence, attacks against schools and hospitals and the use of schools by all parties to the conflict. We recall to the parties that they agreed under the cessation of hostilities agreement not to recruit or use children. The latest figures from UNICEF, according to which more than 9,000 children were recruited and used by parties to the conflict, are simply outrageous. We recall that, on 13 March 2012, the Government of South Sudan signed an action plan to stop and prevent the recruitment and use of children. Any violation of that action plan is a violation of obligations undertaken by the Government.

Faced with the scale of the violations committed and pursuant to Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict, UNMISS should strengthen the monitoring and reporting of information on violations and abuses committed against children. And the Mission should be equipped with adequate resources to do so. We also encourage the commission set up by the African Union to investigate these violations and abuses.

In conclusion, I would like to assure Ms. Pillay and Mr. Dieng that we have heard their call. The Council will act firmly to eliminate the looming threat of yet more serious violence that risks spiralling out of control. It is our collective responsibility to act to prevent, 20 years on, another genocide on the African continent.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Republic of Korea.

I thank High Commissioner Navi Pillay and Special Adviser Adama Dieng for their briefings. We believe that the Council fully echoes their urgent call for attention and action. The ethnically targeted killings in South Sudan are unacceptable and must stop. Only a fortnight ago, the Security Council convened an open debate on the twentieth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, and reaffirmed that never again should such events occur (see S/PV.7155). The use of radio broadcasts to incite ethnic violence is reminiscent of a prelude to that catastrophe, adding a new and dangerous dimension to the crisis. We call on both President Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar to publicly state their firm opposition to any attacks against civilians as well as their commitment to seeking accountability. All political and tribal leaders in South Sudan must publicly declare their objection to violence and take responsible actions accordingly. We look forward to the final report of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on human rights violations.

With the onset of the rainy season, we are deeply concerned about the dire situation of over 1 million displaced people. The UNMISS protection of civilian sites are already overcrowded, and they were never designed to cope with the enormous task of protecting such a huge number of civilians. A comprehensive strategy for the protection of civilians should be formulated to make best use of the capabilities of UNMISS. We also encourage the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to enhance its mediation efforts.

Intensifying battles in the oil-producing fields threaten to trigger a regional escalation of the conflict. The United Nations and IGAD need to swiftly finalize the modalities for implementing the monitoring and verification mechanism under the cessation of hostilities agreement. Only a political solution can return the situation to normalcy. The Council must be ready to take additional measures to discourage spoilers and expedite stability.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Deng (South Sudan): I thank you, Mr. President, and members of the Security Council for giving me the opportunity to address the Council on the critically important issues concerning our country. As this is the first time I address the Security Council under

the presidency of the Republic of Korea, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, and to assure you of our support and cooperation. I would also like to commend your predecessor for successfully steering the Council during the month of April.

My delegation and I have listened with keen interest to the deeply moving statements presented and the concerns raised this afternoon by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, and by the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, my successor and younger brother, Adama Dieng, and the members of the Security Council. I would like to thank both the High Commissioner and the Special Adviser for having visited our country and for giving the current crisis such high priority. I want to assure them, and indeed all the members of the Council, that we sincerely appreciate and genuinely share their deep concerns and commitment to see an end to the violence.

As I have previously stated to the Council, while it is painful to listen to accounts of the tragic situation in our country, our response is not to be defensive or in denial. We recognize that the motivation behind the accounts is to help South Sudan address the crisis in cooperation with the international community. That is why we have consistently expressed our sincere appreciation to the Security Council specifically, and the international community generally, for their steadfast engagement and support.

No one who believes in the ideals of human rights and in the prevention of genocide and related atrocities can quarrel with the pleas and warnings made by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and by members of the Council. As I have repeatedly stated, our people struggled for decades against discrimination and gross violations of human rights. Ours was a struggle for equality and human dignity, which constitute the foundations for human rights. Those principles should guide us in building our nation.

While the tendency towards moral equivalency may be understandable as a tactic, and even a strategy, for engaging the parties on the basis of mutual recognition and respect, it risks equating rights and wrongs in a way that clouds the situation on the ground. It is of course indisputable that the Government must bear the primary responsibility for protecting its citizens without discrimination on ethnic or any other ground and be accountable in that regard. However, that cannot justify placing a democratically elected Government on the same moral, political and legal grounds as a rebel group using violence to overthrow the Government.

The President of South Sudan, Mr. Salva Kiir, told me today that he had said to the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide that if they had time to spend in the country, he would grant them full and unhindered access to establish the scope of the violence in order to gain a deeper understanding of the situation and of who is doing what. The President also spoke to me about the constructive discussions he had with United States Secretary of State John Kerry, to whom he expressed his willingness to meet with the rebel leader Riek Machar in the interests of bringing a speedy end to the war.

We recognize that people do not take up arms to kill and risk being killed without some cause or grievance that should be addressed. That is why our Government, in particular President Kiir, has repeatedly reaffirmed his commitment to dialogue with the rebels to bring a swift end to the violence and promote peace, unity and national reconciliation.

On specific issues raised by the High Commissioner and the Special Adviser in their briefings, the allegation that both sides are recruiting child soldiers is an example of the moral equivalency that clouds the facts and of the need to place responsibility where it belongs. It is well known that since 2003 the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has ended recruiting or deploying child soldiers. That has indeed been acknowledged by the relevant United Nations bodies, which have applauded South Sudan for that action. Although the demands of the war have recently necessitated army recruitment, especially with the defection of large numbers of soldiers to the rebels, it has not at all entailed recruiting child soldiers. As a prominent member of the Government told me recently, our problem is the reverse, namely, that we have an ageing army. In contrast to the Government, the rebel army is known for its recruiting and deploying child soldiers, its "White Army" being a notorious example.

On the issue of human rights violations in general, President Kiir has condemned it unequivocally and, in response to the recent developments, has created a high-level committee chaired by the former Chief Justice to investigate gross violations of human rights and to

hold accountable those found responsible. During the eruption of violence in Juba on 15 and 16 December, the President went as far as to say that anyone targeting members of the Nuer community in his name was against him. The Government has also welcomed and pledged support for the African Union commission of inquiry on South Sudan under the chairmanship of former President of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo, charged with investigating human rights violations resulting from the current crisis. That contrasts sharply with the situation of human rights on the part of the rebels, where massive abuses and ethnically targeted massacres have become a conspicuous part of their war strategy, with scarcely a condemnatory word from its leadership.

It is unfortunate that the very regrettable incident of the youth attack on the United Nations compound in Bor is being equated with atrocities committed by the rebel army in Bentiu and Malakal. The Bor incident, which was strongly condemned by the Government, was provoked with the youth of the town of Bor heard internally displaced persons in the United Nations compound celebrating the capture of Bentiu by the rebels who had only recently destroyed Bor and massacred its inhabitants. The incident was initially intended as a peaceful rally to submit a protest letter to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), requesting that the internally displaced persons be removed from Bor where they were now perceived by the youth as a source of provocation.

A peaceful protest got out of hand when the peacekeepers fired shots into the air to stop the youth from entering the camp, which was construed by the youth as an attack on them, provoking them to force their way into the camp. I would like to note that local Government authorities had informed UNMISS of the intentions of the youth to demonstrate and that the SPLA, in collaboration with UNMISS, work together to calm the situation. That is a clear indication that the Government sees UNMISS as a critical partner in South Sudan.

In Bentiu, the rebels massacred hundreds of civilians, including people who had sought shelter or refuge in churches and mosques and patients who were receiving care in hospitals, as was noted in today's briefings. That has been strongly deplored and condemned by our Government.

Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to highlight two points that I consider crucial to a constructive response to the crisis in our country.

First, we very much appreciate the concerted efforts of the international community in support of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development/African Union peace process. We would urge continued, and indeed stepped up, engagement at the highest level to accelerate an early end to this devastating and senseless violence.

Secondly, we all recognize that, after the long war in the Sudan, South Sudan has been weakened and has very limited capacity for ensuring internal peace, security and stability. Its capacity to deliver social services and generate and sustain badly needed socio-economic development is also severely constrained. That was indeed the reason for the ambitious, multifaceted support that created UNMISS. The current crisis is weakening, and indeed diminishing, the limited capacity of the State even more. It is understandable that the United Nations must reconsider it priorities in the light of the crisis, in particular to support the peace process, protect civilians, deliver humanitarian assistance and promote respect for human rights.

But South Sudan also needs support for capacity-building now, even more than it did before. Withdrawing that support, whether for lack or resources or as a punitve measure, can only compound the crisis. The United Nations needs to consider maintaining strong capacity-building, even if it is not within UNMISS. Furthermore, greater confidence-building mechanisms need to be put in place for the collaboration work between the Government of South Sudan and UNMISS. My Government continues to remain committed to working with all humanitarian actors in assisting us alleviate the dire conditions our our people. What South Sudan needs is understanding, compassion and support in building a nation that can ensure peace, security, stability and development for all its people.

Let me end with some final comments on the nature of our quest for peace. Although our country is now acutely divided, we believe that our culture is one in which conflicts can be ultimately resolved by balancing accountability with mutual accommodation, forgiveness and reconciliation. It was the pursuit of those values that made President Kiir grant amnesty to militias, mostly Nuer, and absorb them into the army, to

the extent that they eventually constituted the majority of the armed forces. Although most of them have now joined the rebellion, President Kiir continues to call on those values as the pillars of our peace process and has expressed his willingness to take any steps that would accelerate the way forward towards an end to the war.

In that connection, I would like to report that President Kiir graciously granted me permission to meet with the four detainees in Juba and the seven who had been released and placed under the protection of the Government of Kenya. All of them opposed the use of violence to overthrow the Government, but supported dialogue to address the concerns of the rebels and other opposition groups to end the war and restore peace and national reconciliation. As the President stated, one of the reasons that the charges against the four accused were eventually dropped was to foster efforts towards peace and national reconciliation.

I would like to conclude by once more reiterating our trust and deep appreciation for the understanding and unwavering support of the United Nations for our country as one united nation that aspires to be at peace with itself and to promote development and prosperity for all its people.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.